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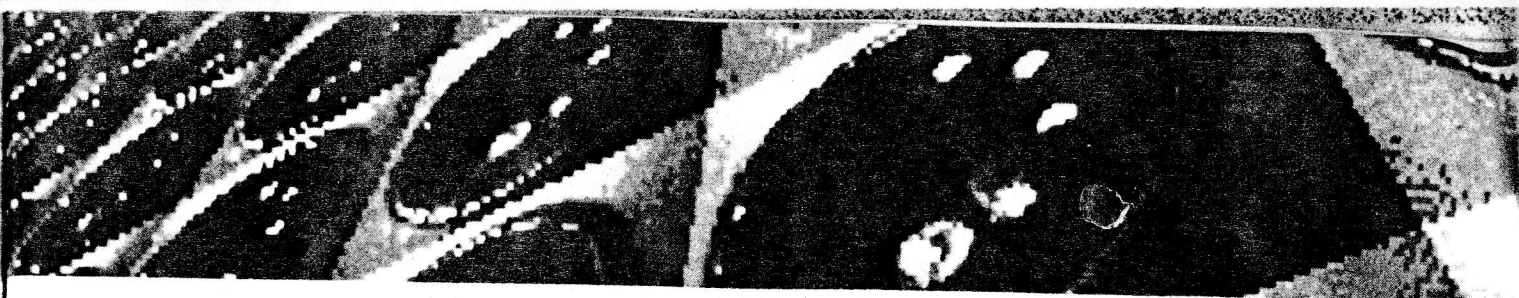
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**I**N THREE MONTHS IT WILL BE 1990.

And with the closing of a decade and the advent of the millenium (that's a thousand years, folks), one can fairly hear the pounding hooves of a herd of culture watchers and fortunetellers ready to make predictions on what will be happening in the years ahead.

And they'll probably be wrong. Don't believe us? As evidence we present the Chicago NAMM (National Association Of Music Merchants) show that took place just a few months ago. This mammoth gathering of musical instrument manufacturers and music store owners often is considered an accurate forecaster of trends in music products and styles.

But just two or three years ago the NAMM show was packed to the rafters with new electronic drum kits—and every booth had at least one seer predicting the demise of "traditional" drums. So what happened? At the latest convention more than 50 percussion companies exhibited as wide an array of acoustic drums as one ever could hope to see. There were new innovations in drumheads, shell materials, cymbal designs, hardware, and percussion instruments, not to mention ethnic drums from dumbeks to bodhrans. In fact, one could almost say that we're in the midst of an acoustic drum renaissance, less than three years after many electronic drum companies—and keyboard players with overactive imaginations—were celebrating the instrument's passing.

*Continued*

# 1990

## AND BEYOND



From Flashy Sticks To  
Stylish Snares, The Latest  
Music Industry Trade Show  
Offered A Taste Of Things  
To Come • By Phil Hood &  
Bob Saydlowski, Jr.

## NAMM

In the meantime electronic drums have been going through big changes, too. They've become drummer-friendly, so that now many players simply look on their various pads and triggers as components of their overall drum kit.

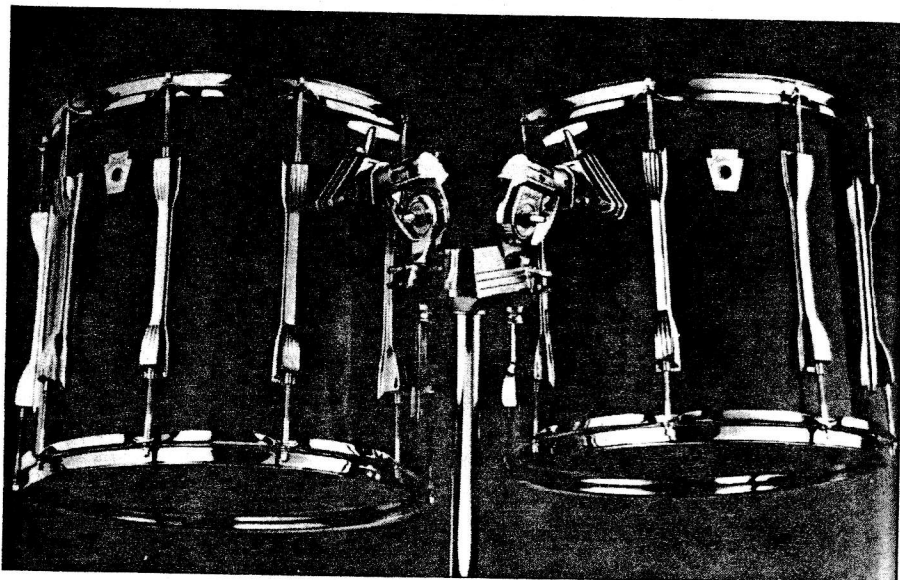
What does it all mean for the years ahead? Well, though our crystal ball is a little hazy, we'd say it means that drummers will have more good tools to choose from than ever before: from the tiniest snares to the strongest sticks, from the most exotic effects racks to the simplest hand percussion. So without further ado, let's take a tour of this year's NAMM show and check out what new items you'll be finding in stores this Christmas and in the decade ahead.

### Drums

Not only are acoustic drums riding a comeback wave but now Slingerland, a once-legendary drum name, has returned. That's the big news from H.S.S., which once stood for Hohner/Sonor/Sabian, but now signifies Hohner/Slingerland/Sabian. (Sonor now is distributed by Kaman.) The company displayed mid-priced Spirit and Spirit-Plus drum kits as well as a prototype "Made In U.S.A." drum kit, which generated a lot of patriotic excitement.

New snares were the order of the day at nearly every other booth. Pearl unveiled new Custom Classic snare drums in 5" X 14" and 6-1/2" X 14" sizes (\$720.00). These drums are made with a solid one-piece maple shell; brass lugs, hoops, and strainer; and fitted with gold-plated steel snares. (See Product Test on page 74.)

Pearl also debuted the Custom Z drum set, described by the company as the finest musical instrument Pearl ever has made. No doubt it is among the most beautiful. The shells are 100 percent maple with an exterior ply of bird's-eye maple in a champagne finish. A standard five-piece kit with hardware is \$4,860.00, so save your pennies.



Solid Percussion has a new name (they used to be Select Snare Drums) and they debuted maple, bronze, and exotic wood snare drums. Their unique bending technology now allows them to build solid snares of oak, cocobola, and other woods. However, according to the company, they are discouraging orders for drums made of the more exotic woods: They don't feel it's worth cutting down the rain forest just to get material for snare drums.

Tama brought out not one, but *four* new solid maple snares ranging from a 3-1/4" X 14" piccolo (\$599.00) to an 8" X 14" model (\$679.00). These feature two-way lugs, cam-lever strainers, and die-cast hoops.

Another snare drum maker, Drum Workshop, added two new brass snares in 4" X 14" and 6-1/2" X 14" sizes to their Collector Series. And Yamaha drew a big crowd when Peter Erskine visited their booth to demonstrate his new snare drum design.

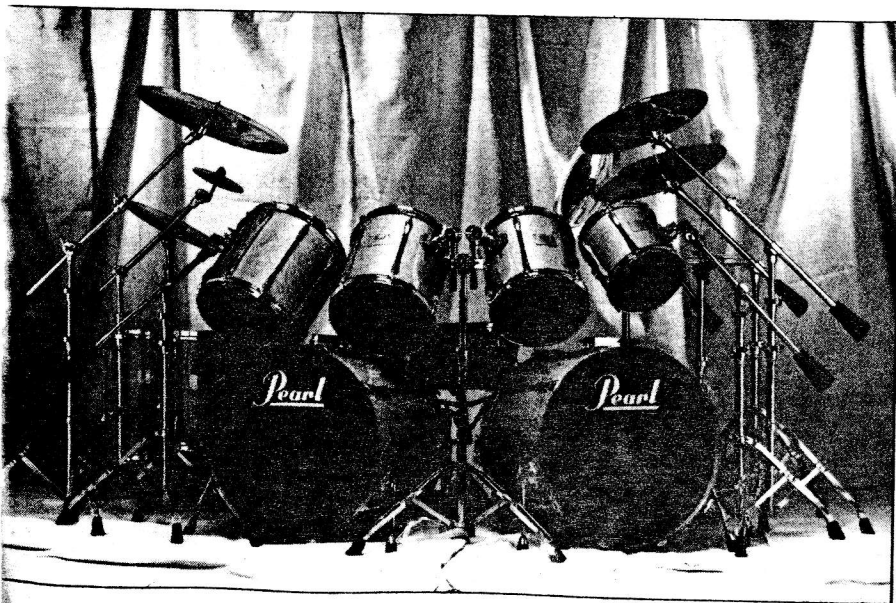
Over in Cymbal Land Zildjian made metal history by introducing their new Zildjian alloy snare (\$1,195.00), built by Noble & Cooley. This rare coupling of manufacturers marks the first time a Zildjian alloy has been used for anything other than cymbals, gongs, or bells.

(A D&D first: Though not exhibiting at the show Australian Chris Brady was on hand to scare up interest in the snare drums he's making in Australia. Brady drums are hand-made, using hardwoods indigenous to the Australian region, mostly jarrah and wandoo.)

Even though Ludwig Drums is up for sale by its parent firm, Selmer, the company still is forging ahead with new products. Most notable is the reintroduction of the piccolo snare drum in both maple (\$325.00) and bronze (\$410.00) shells. Ludwig also debuted two new lines of drum finishes: the Classic Shadow and Classic Coat, in black, red, and white.

For entry-level and intermediate players, CB Percussion has added the new MX and Internationale series drums (five-piece sets from \$729.50 to \$829.50). The top of the CB Percussion line includes the MS series of maple, steel, and brass snare drums, available in 4-1/2" X 13", 6-1/2" X 14", or

(Above) Ludwig's new Long Lugs. (Left) Pearl's all-maple Custom Z drums.





8" X 14" sizes (\$159.50 to \$299.00).

Remo has responded to the trend toward smaller drum sets with two new six-piece sets, the MA 2612 Mastertouch (\$1,235.00) and the EN-2612 Encore set (\$1,789.00). These feature 16" X 20" bass drums, 9" X 10", 11" X 12", and 13" X 14" side-mount power tom-toms, plus a 14" X 15" tom-tom suspended from a low floor stand, and a 3-1/2" X 14" piccolo snare. Remo also introduced a new Prismatic drum finish, available as a shell covering or a front bass drumhead. The Prismatics, offered in either bright chrome or clear, refract light through hundreds of triangular prisms, creating different geometric patterns with each movement of the drumhead.

Inventor Don Sleishman came to Chicago from his home in Australia to introduce his Total Resonance System drums. In a design that's similar to Pearl's Free-Floating principle, the drum shell floats between both drumheads via an outer ring system. The shells are interchangeable, and the tension applied to each head is the only tension on the shell. (Sleishman

21" Z-Mega Bell Ride (\$248.00). It features a cup almost three times the size of a regular cymbal cup, nearly eight inches in diameter. Its main purpose is to provide a "killer" bell sound, according to Colin Schofield of Zildjian.

At the Sabian booth, Jack DeJohnette was presiding over the introduction of his Signature Series cymbals. Neither lathed nor hammered, the cymbals' tonal colors are determined solely by the shape and metal. DeJohnette played three days of demos and also showed off the cymbals to other drummers such as Peter Erskine and Steve Smith. Carmine Appice also has a new Sabian Signature cymbal, the 18" Chinese model. Sabian also premiered 14" Fusion hi-hats, a re-designed China cymbal line, and a 12" bell cymbal.

Gretsch announced that they now have more than 50 model choices of their Istanbul brand Turkish-made cymbals. They range from the small 8" Istanbul splash cymbal (\$96.00) to the big 22" Turkish Ride (\$292.00).

(Left) Jack DeJohnette demonstrating his Signature Series at the Sabian booth. (Below) LP's unique triggering device, the Spike.



pioneered the double-bass drum pedal many years ago: His current model was on display, along with a direct motion hi-hat stand he'd just finished.)

### Heads

Evans' Genera series drumheads, originally built for Noble & Cooley snare drums, were one of the show's highlights. These feature a single-ply drumhead film with a built-in tone control ring (E-ring) that "floats," rather than being laminated to the surface of the playing head. It's designed for players who want a slightly drier sound. Cana-Sonic brought out the Power Play heads made of a combination of plastic and fiberglass. The design allows for tighter tuning of the drumhead without loss of tone, according to the company.

Aquarian also unveiled a line of patented drumheads by endorsers Tommy Aldridge (14" Superdot), Vinny Appice (14" Powerdot), Joe Franco (14" Doubledot), and Carmine Appice (14" Rockdot). You'll find those guys' mugs on the packages.

Ludwig introduced a complete family of "Black Rocker" drumheads. These are constructed of black mylar and are available in all sizes from 6" to 26".

### Cymbals

Zildjian added a unique ride cymbal to its Z series with the

### Percussion

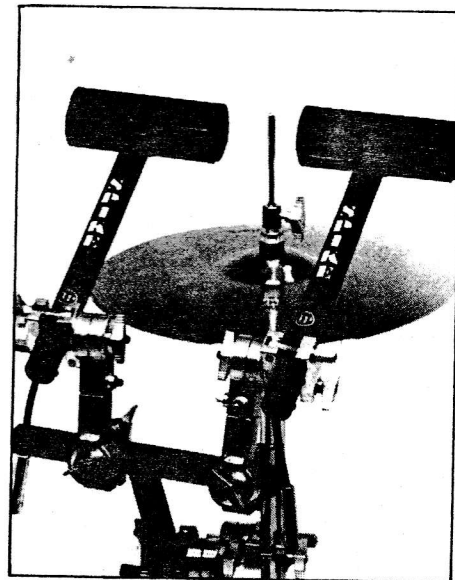
Cosmic Percussion brought out the CP660 Ricardo conga, a small, portable, beginners' instrument with a high, rounded rim. It's made of Siam oak and retails for a disarmingly low \$139.95. Latin Percussion introduced new bell blocks, available singly or in two- and five-piece sets. These rugged temple-style blocks are made of multiple plies of rock maple glued with tongue-and-groove joints. They look nearly indestructible but we'll have to wait for a future D&D Product Test to be sure. (Single bellblocks with clamps for a 3/8" rod are \$39.95.) The company also unveiled its full-size wood congas (at prices from \$274.95) and mbiras (thumb pianos) with padauk tops and gourd or coconut bodies. The thumb pianos are available in 8-note (\$66.75), 11-note (\$88.95), and 16-note models (\$104.50).

### Hardware & Accessories

The Pure Tone company made their NAMM debut, showing what they termed "mechanical gates" for drums. Actually, these are nifty external mutes with carpeted pads, adjustable in small increments, for getting rid of overtones and ring while maintaining the drum's tone.

Original Drum Screen, another first-timer at NAMM, introduced a portable acrylic isolation booth, available in five tints, as well as a clear version. One can imagine the studio and live applications for this product. The company claims a dramatic improvement in the live drum-set sound since the drum screen isolates the drums from other instrument mikes (4' screens are \$349.00, 5' screens are \$399.00, carrying bags also available).

If we had to pick one hardware item that really stood out it might be the Ludwig Long Lugs. The



## NAMM

full-length lugs are a beautiful contemporary take-off on traditional lug design. Made of die-cast zinc with chrome plating, the long lugs are available on Ludwig Classic or Super Classic drum outfits.

Another impressive hardware innovation came from Tama in the form of Stilt Series hardware. The stilts, a set of stands that angle toward the drummer, are definitely a new look in hardware. Individual cymbal and hi-hat stands range from \$125.00 to \$165.00. Remo presented the Remo reflectors for marching-drums and drum-set use. These semi-rigid plastic reflectors attach to the back side of the drum to reflect sound forward, significantly increasing volume.

The newest Remo innovation is the Putty Pad (\$6.50), a glob of red "Silly Putty-like" material that can be rolled out to form an instant practice pad on any hard surface. A drum trigger also can be embedded in the putty, says Rick Drumm of Remo. Pretty interesting: Rick calls it, "Serious Putty."

### Sticks

Over at the Maxx Stixx booth, Cheap Trick drummer Bun E. Carlos was showing off his new signature sticks. The Maxx BC will be offered in regular length (16") and extra long (16-3/8"). Pearl introduced a new pro line of 15 sticks, including three in black satin finishes.

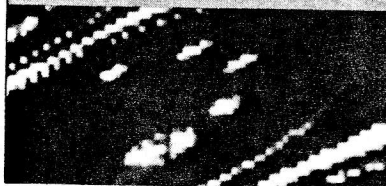
Fantastix had perhaps the most colorful stick display. Their custom drum sticks and mallets are wrapped in various nylon thread grips. The sticks are available in literally hundreds of custom designs. Not to be outdone, Vic Firth was showing the new Omar Hakim signature stick in a honey-hickory finish. Vic's other signature models by Dave Weckl, Peter Erskine, and Steve Gadd were displayed as well.

### Electronic Percussion

Terry Bozzio has joined with Drum Workshop to develop the new TBX-3 (\$130.00) electronic drum pad. This compact 8" X 5" X 3" device features three separate trigger areas and will trigger non-MIDI controllers, drum machines, and drum-to-MIDI converters. The pad is designed with a central playing surface and two outer trigger areas that are raised slightly to facilitate faster access during performance.

## MANUFACTURER'S ADDRESSES

**A. D. Speaker Systems**, 404 7th Ave., Myrtle Beach, SC 29577; **Aquarian**, 1140 N. Justin Ave., Anaheim, CA 92807; **Cana-Sonic**, 415 Howe Ave., Box 661, Shelton, CT; **CB Percussion**, Box 507, Bloomfield, CT 06002; **Cosmic Percussion**, 160 Belmont Ave., Garfield, NJ 07026; **ddrum**, 25 Lindeman Dr., Trumbull, CT 06611; **Dauz Designs**, 1147 Stanford Ave., Redondo, CA 90278; **Drastik Plastik**, 2603 184th St., Redondo Beach, CA 90278; **Drum Workshop**, 2697 Lavery Ct., Unit 16, Newbury Park, CA 91320; **Dynacord**, 2697 Lavery Court #16, Newbury Park, CA 91320; **Evans**, Box 58, Dodge City, KS 67801; **Fantastix**, 528 Avery St., Pittsburgh, PA 15212; **Vic Firth**, 323 Whiting Ave., Dedham, MA 02026; **Gon Bops Of California**, 2302 E. 38th St., Los Angeles, CA 90058; **Gretsch**, 1 Gretsch Plaza, Box 358, Ridgeland, SC 29936; **Kaman Music (Gibraltar Hardware)**, Box 507, Bloomfield, CT 06002; **Kat MIDI Controllers**, 300 Burnett Rd., Chicopee, MA 01020; **LP Music Group**, 160 Belmont Ave., Garfield, NJ 07026; **Ludwig Industries**, Box 310, Elkhart, IN 46515; **Maxx Stixx**, 7307 Barnard Mill Rd., Box 181, Wonder Lake, IL 60097; **Original Drum Screen**, 2573 28th St., Wyoming, MI 49509; **Pearl International**, 408 Harding Dr., Nashville, TN 37211; **Pro-Mark**, 10707 Craighead, Houston, TX 77025; **Pure Tone**, 29504 Dover, Warren, MI 48093; **Remo**, 12804 Raymer St., No. Hollywood, CA 91605; **Sabian**, 4800 Sheppard Ave. East, #115, Scarborough, Ontario, M1S4N5, Canada; **Slingerland**, Box 9167, Richmond, VA 23227; **Solid Percussion**, 120-B Lee Rd., Watsonville, CA 95076; **Tama**, 1726 Winchester Rd., Bensalem, PA 19020; **Trigger Perfect**, 2048 E. Villa St., Unit 3, Pasadena, CA 91107; **Avedis Zildjian Company**, 22 Longwater Dr., Norwell, MA 02061.



LP Music Group brought out the Spike (\$89.95) triggering device, that serves as an alternative to pads. Its tubular-shaped design makes it easy to hit from any angle, so positioning is a snap. It can be mounted on tom arms or cymbal stands, using any standard drum clamp.

A.D. Speaker Systems displayed the D-8 drum pad setup (\$875.00), featuring five tom pads, a snare pad, and two kick drum pads, all mounted on a tripod stand. The A.D. pads will work with currently available MIDI drum translators.

But those were only a few of the drum pads being debuted at NAMM. Dauz Designs also got in on the drum-pad stampede, with their FSR (force sensing resistor) pads. These offer up to three different zones per pad. The TBX-3 (\$129.00) Electronic Drum Pad from Drum Workshop also features three separate trigger areas, isolated from one another to prevent cross-triggering. And Drastik Plastik came out with a new Quad trigger pad, presumably going one better than the competition. This is essentially four square pads in one casing.

Trigger Perfect, who shared a booth with Dauz, released a new, more durable pickup casing for the SC-10 drum triggers. They also displayed their KDT-1 trigger, designed specifically for use with the DrumKat.

ddrum introduced a software upgrade for the ddrum 21, offering four megabytes of sound memory, 50 drum sounds, system-exclusive data storage, and a response feature called "Drumhead Vibration Algorithm." They also had the ddrum Tube, a hard metal cylinder that can be stand-mounted for triggering percussive sounds.

Tim Root was on hand to demo Dynacord's ADD-Two 16/20 bit drum sampler, a 16-voice, eight-channel unit, with disk drive, 44.1 kHz sampling, and one meg of RAM, expandable to four megs.

### The Decade Ahead

Snare drums galore. Drummer-friendly electronic percussion gear. Space-age drumheads and innovative accessories by the score. If there is an overall trend in these new products it escapes us. But it sure seems there will be

enough new goodies to keep you occupied in the coming year, at least. And if there aren't, don't worry. We've only scratched the surface of what was at this summer's show. And by the time we get around to all of them, the drum market could shift gears again, heading off into uncharted territory. Only one thing is certain: The future is tough to predict. •